Claims

1.   A communications system comprising:

a host operably connected to a first network entity having a first address

5   space associated therewith, the first network entity being arranged to receive

from a second network entity information relating to at least one address space,

wherein

the host is arranged to process the information relating to the at least one

address space in order to ascertain an available return route for use by a

10   communication in reply to an outgoing communication from the host.

2.   A system as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising a third network entity

arranged to communicate information relating to an address space of the third

network entity to the first network entity.

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3.   A system as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the first address space of the

first network entity is inherited from the second network entity.

4.   A system as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the first network entity has a

20   second address space associated therewith, the second address space of the

first network entity being inherited from the third network entity.

5.   A system as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the first network entity is

arranged to communicate the first address space to any network entities

25   disposed hierarchically below the first network entity.

6.   A system as claimed in Claim 4, wherein the first network entity is

arranged to communicate the second address space to any network entities

disposed hierarchically below the first network entity.

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7.   A host apparatus for operably coupling to a first network entity, the first

network entity having a first address space associated therewith and arranged to

receive from a second network entity information relating to at least one address space, the apparatus comprising:

a processing unit arranged to process the information relating to the at least one address space in order to ascertain an available return route for use
5   by a communication in reply to an outgoing communication from the host.

8.   An apparatus as claimed in Claim 7, wherein the first address space of the first network entity is a subset of the at least one address space.

10   9.   An apparatus as claimed in Claim 7, wherein the first network entity has a second address space associated therewith, the second address space of the first network entity being inherited from a third network entity.

10.   A use for information relating to at least one address space received from
15   a network entity by a host in order to ascertain an available return route for use by a communication in reply to an outgoing communication from the host.

11.   A method of ascertaining an available return route for a communication in reply to an outgoing communication from a host, the method comprising the
20   steps of:

communicating at least one address space from at least one network entity to the host;

deducing the available return route from the at least one address space.

25   12.   A method as claimed in Claim 11, further comprising the steps of:

operably connecting the host to a first network entity having a first address space associated therewith, and

the first network entity receiving from a second network entity the information relating to at least one address space.

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13.   A method as claimed in Claim 12, further comprising the steps of:

providing a third network entity, and

the third network entity communicating information relating to an address space of the third network entity to the first network entity.

14.   A method as claimed in Claim 12, wherein the first address space of the
5   first network entity is inherited from the second network entity.

15.   A method as claimed in Claim 13, wherein the first network entity has a second address space associated therewith, the second address space of the first network entity being inherited from the third network entity.

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16.   A method as claimed in Claim 12, further comprising the step of:

the first network entity communicating the first address space to any network entities disposed hierarchically below the first network entity.

15   17.   A method as claimed in Claim 15, further comprising the step of:

the first network entity communicating the second address space to any network entities disposed hierarchically below the first network entity.

·18.   Computer executable software code stored on a computer readable
20   medium, the code being for ascertaining an available return route for a communication in reply to an outgoing communication from a host, the code comprising:

code to communicate at least one address space from at least one network entity to the host, and

25   code to enable the host deduce the available return route from the at least one address space.

19.   A programmed computer for ascertaining an available return route for a communication in reply to an outgoing communication from a host, comprising
30   memory having at least one region for storing computer executable program code, and

a processor for executing the program code stored in the memory, wherein the program code includes:

code to communicate at least one address space from at least one network entity to the host, and

code to enable the host deduce the available return route from the at least one address space.

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20.   A computer readable medium having computer executable software code stored thereon, the code being for ascertaining an available return route for a communication in reply to an outgoing communication from a host and comprising:

10   code to communicate at least one address space from at least one network entity to the host, and

code to enable the host deduce the available return route from the at least one address space.

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